



Shanghai New Year

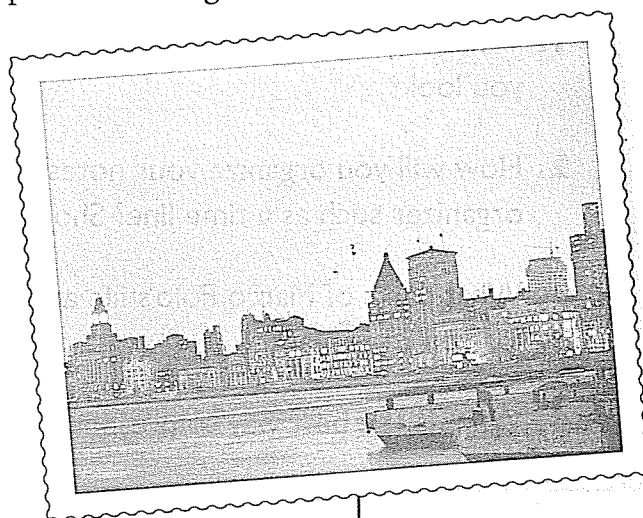
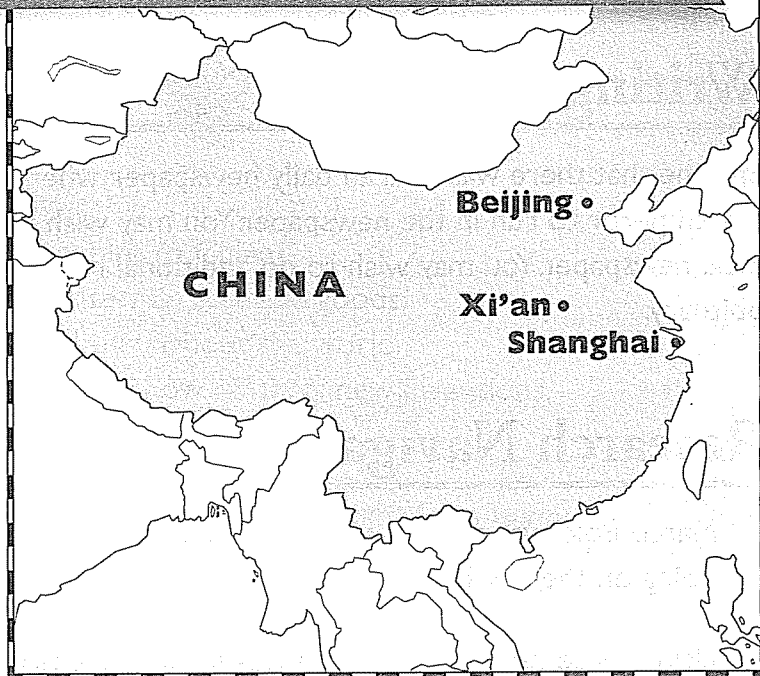
“Wow. I thought Beijing was crowded, but Shanghai is *really crazy!*” Bryce commented as he looked out the bus window at the sea of surrounding traffic.

“Shanghai is the biggest city in China and one of the ten most heavily populated cities in the world,” Avaron noted. “And don’t forget, we’re here during its biggest event, the Chinese New Year.”

Shanghai (pronounced *shang-hy*) is known for its extensive celebration of the country’s most important holiday. Public transportation, which is always crowded, is mobbed during the holiday. Some guidebooks actually recommend avoiding the city during this two-week celebration since it is so hectic and so many Chinese people are traveling to be with their families during this time.

Bryce and Avaron were jostled off the bus along with scores of other people. Some people were already celebrating. The sounds of the revelers carried along the streets of the city. Bryce and Avaron walked along the riverfront in an area called the Bund. The promenade along the Huangpu River provided great views of the crowds of revelers as well as the mixture of eastern and western architecture. The British forced the Chinese to open the city to foreign trade in the mid-1800s. After that, many Europeans and Americans moved to Shanghai to make their fortunes. They helped to establish the city as a leader in trading and banking. The Chinese Communists took over in 1949. Today, Shanghai is considered a special municipal district. Although municipal districts are supervised by the national government, they are independent of the provincial government. Shanghai’s civilian government is responsible for city administration.

This bustling cosmopolitan city is experiencing rapid change. It is home to thousands of multinational corporations that keep residents in touch with many different parts of the world. Over 100 new skyscrapers are built each year,



Shanghai is the most populated city in China.

filling the skyline with tall buildings. It is a vital port city, and its name means “on the sea.” The eastern side of Shanghai is exposed to the East China Sea. The city is also located near the massive Yangtze River. It has one of the best transportation systems in the country. Along with its ships and boats, Shanghai has two international airports, a light rail, and a rapidly expanding subway system.

The city is famous for its numerous shopping opportunities. One of its busiest shopping areas is a street called Nanjing Donglu. The road is open to pedestrians only. No vehicles are permitted, allowing room for people to walk in safety. It is covered with large department stores, small boutiques, malls, and restaurants. It is crowded with people both day and night.

Bryce and Avaron gazed at the tremendous skyscrapers all around them. “Many people believe that it is only a matter of time before Shanghai replaces Hong Kong as the industrial, trading, and financial center of China,” Bryce noted.

The kids proceeded to the famous Shanghai Museum on People’s Square. This former race course has been transformed into a green space, filled with lawns and plants. The museum is filled with rare works of art from the many dynasties.

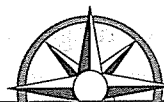
“It’s amazing how nice it is to see grass after so much pavement,” Bryce said, as they exited the museum hours later. He smiled and gestured so that Avaron would notice the old man strolling across the grass. The man was carrying a cage with a small bird in it. Birds are common pets in China, since they don’t need much room. Men can be seen gathering in parks with their caged birds at their sides. The kids returned to their hotel to have dinner and sleep.

Hoping to escape some of the crowds, they got up early the next morning and rented a motor-tricycle driver to take them back to the Bund. They climbed into the back of the three-wheeled vehicle, and the driver weaved through traffic. They were surprised by the smog hanging low over the city. The air pollution is a result of people burning coal, a cheap fuel source. They were also surprised to see a huge crowd of people moving in slow motion on the riverfront walkway. They were practicing t’ai chi ch’uan (pronounced *ty jee chwahn*), a form of moving meditation. Participants proceed through a series of smooth and graceful movements while they concentrate on calm, relaxing thoughts.

“I can see why people would need a way to relax here. It’s so big and busy. And have you noticed how few green spaces there are?” Bryce asked.



A vendor
selling lanterns



Art in the Shanghai Museum

The Shanghai Museum has a collection of 120,000 works of ancient Chinese art. The museum includes ten galleries on four floors. The galleries display such things as ceramics, paintings, sculpture, and furniture. To see some of the art, go to Collections at www.shanghaimuseum.net/en/index.asp

"Yes, there are so many people here that living space, such as high-rise apartments, is more important than parks. Maybe we should go visit the Yu Yuan Garden," Avaron suggested. "We can walk from the Bund."

The kids entered the 400-year-old garden. They wandered through its six sections.

"The Grand Rockery was my favorite part," said Bryce. "Imagine moving about 2,000 tons of stone to make a miniature mountain. I liked the ponds too, especially the lotus (waterlily) pool."

"The walls that divide the garden are beautiful," added Avaron. "I like how they made them look like dragons by using tiles that looked like scales and decorating the top of the walls with dragons' heads."

Next, they visited Jade Buddha Temple. One of Shanghai's few Buddhist temples, it features two solid white jade Buddhas. The sitting Buddha is six feet tall and is decorated with precious jewels. The other figure is in a reclining position; it is three feet long.

"I thought jade was green," said Bryce.

"No, its color ranges from creamy white to light apple green to the deep jade green, which is a bluish green color."

"It's amazing to see jade that has been carved into such large statues. The only jade I'd seen before was a tiny piece on a ring," said Bryce.

After returning to the hotel and writing postcards, the kids ventured out to the Yunnan Road Night Market. While the market specializes in noodles, all kinds of foods can be found. Vendors sell duck's tongue, deep-fried scorpions, cats, and rabbits.

"Bryce, what are you going to eat?"

Avaron turned around to see Bryce paying a vendor. The vendor then handed him a skewer. Bryce bit the meat off the long pin and smiled.

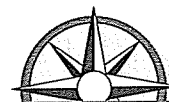
"Wow, these scorpions are delicious. Want some?" he asked.

Avaron took a step backwards. "I think I'll just have noodles tonight," she replied, as Bryce walked over to the next table. Suddenly, there was a series of loud pops and bangs as firecrackers exploded around them.

Although they had heard the firecrackers before, the noise was always startling. The kids jumped, and one of the vendors was so surprised he dropped a bowl of noodles. Some believe the firecrackers scare away evil spirits. Others use firecrackers to send the old year out while welcoming in the new one.



Many people in China practice t'ai chi ch'uan outdoors.



T'ai Chi Ch'uan

Chinese people believe *chi* is an energy that runs through all living things. The practice of t'ai chi ch'uan is designed to use breathing to move an individual's chi through the body. The movement is a series of connected postures. A person may move through over 100 movements and postures. It is considered both a form of exercise and a way to relax.

"So why is the Chinese New Year celebrated on a different date than our new year?" Bryce asked.

Avaron explained, "The Chinese New Year is based on the lunar calendar instead of the Gregorian calendar. It begins with the first new moon of the year and ends two weeks later when the moon is full. It is a celebration of springtime."

Preparations for the festivities begin several days before the new moon. People clean and decorate their houses. Dirt is swept up and then carried out the back door. It is thought that sweeping it out the front door would sweep away the family's good fortune. Homes are also filled with flowers, symbolizing rebirth and new growth.

The first new moon of the year is New Year's Eve. At Longhua Temple, the oldest and largest Buddhist temple in Shanghai, the bell tolls 108 times at midnight. Each sounding of the bell is said to represent one kind of earthly happiness.

During this two-week period, families gather together. There is much feasting on traditional dishes, such as dumplings. A dumpling is a thinly rolled piece of dough filled with ground meat or vegetables. It symbolizes good fortune for the coming year.

"Hey, did you know that one of the traditional New Year's dishes is a whole fish? It is served with the head and the tail. This represents togetherness and abundance. Do you want to eat one?" Bryce grinned at Avaron.

"No thanks. I don't like my food looking at me while I'm eating," she replied.

"You have no sense of adventure when it comes to food," Bryce laughed.

"Come on, I don't want to miss the Parade of Lanterns," Avaron responded.

The Parade of Lanterns is the final event of the festivities, held during the full moon. Bryce and Avaron found a spot in the crowd. A large group of children carrying lighted lanterns passed by. Then a large dragon approached. Made of bamboo, cloth, and paper, it was held up on poles by several people who ran along underneath it. Swaying up and down, the gold and red dragon moved back and forth across the street, accompanied by loud drums and cymbals.

"The dragon is a symbol of good luck, power, strength, and success," Bryce commented.

"Yeah, and you'd probably eat one if you could," Avaron replied.

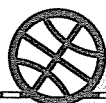
"Given the chance, I just might," Bryce said, grinning. "Since Shanghai is the gateway to the Yangtze River, it will be easy for us to arrange the next leg of the trip tomorrow. After all of this crazy activity, I'm looking forward to relaxing on a boat for a while."



A dragon dances in the New Year parade.



Wander the Almanac



China		United States	
Population (2005 estimated): 1,306,313,812 (growth rate: 0.58%); birth rate: 13 births per 1000; life expectancy: 72.27 years	Hakka dialects, minority languages	Population (2005 estimated): 295,734,134 (growth rate: 0.92%); birth rate: 14 births per 1000; life expectancy: 77.71 years	Black 12.9%; Asian 4.2%; American Indian and Alaska Native 1%; Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander 0.2%; other race 15,359,073 (5.5%); Hispanic origin ¹ 12.5%
Occupations (2003 estimated): agriculture 49%, industry 22%, services 29%	Ethnic groups: Han Chinese 91.9%; Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, Korean, and other nationalities 8.1%	Occupations: managerial, professional, technical 34.9%; manufacturing, extraction, transportation, crafts 22.7%; sales, office 15.5%; services 16.3%; farming, forestry, fishing 0.7%	<i>1. Persons of Hispanic origin are people of Latin American descent (including Cuban, Mexican, or Puerto Rican origin) who may be of any race or ethnic group.</i>
Population below poverty line (2001 estimated): 10%	Religions (2002 estimated): Christian 3%–4%; Daoist (Taoist), Buddhist, Muslim 1%–2%; officially atheist 95%	Population below poverty line (2004 estimated): 12%	Religions (2002 estimated): Christian 78% (Protestant 52%; Roman Catholic 24%; Mormon 2%); Jewish 1%; Muslim 1%; other 10%; none 10%
Type of money: Yuan/Renminbi	Literacy rate (2002): 91% (over age 15)	Type of money: dollar	Literacy rate (1999 estimated): 97% (age 15 and over)
Languages: Standard Chinese (Mandarin/ Putonghua), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghaiese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan,		Languages (2000): English 82.1%, Spanish 10.7%, other 7.2%	
		Ethnic groups (2003 estimated): White 81.7%;	

Use the almanac excerpts above to answer each question.

1. Which country is more racially mixed? _____
2. Which country has more people below the poverty line? How did you find your answer?

3. Which country has a more varied workforce? How can you tell?

4. What information in the almanac helps you to compare the educated populations of China and the United States?

5. What is one new thing you learned from this almanac?



Name _____

Date _____

Vocabulary Voyage



Use the context clues from the passage as a definition. Write the word that goes with its correct context clue.

cosmopolitan
promenade
smog

lunar
revelers
vendors

meditation
skewer

pedestrian
skyscrapers

1. Bryce and Avaron walked along the riverfront...
2. Some people were already celebrating. The sounds...
3. ...in touch with many different parts of the world
4. ...tall buildings
5. No vehicles are permitted, allowing room for people to walk in safety.
6. ...air pollution
7. ...they concentrate on calm, relaxing thoughts
8. ...sell duck's tongue
9. ...bit the meat off the long pin
10. ...moon



Comprehension Expedition



Darken the circle for the best answer.

1. Which best describes the goal of Chinese New Year revelers?
- (A) They are happy it is the end of a bad year.
 - (B) They use lights and loud noises to scare away dragons.
 - (C) They hope to gain abundance and prosperity in the coming year.
 - (D) They are sending away last year's bad luck.
2. How is the government in Shanghai different from the government in Beijing?
- (A) Shanghai is independent of the provincial government.
 - (B) Shanghai is independent of the national government.
 - (C) Shanghai does not have a Communist government.
 - (D) Shanghai is governed by Europeans and Americans.

Write the following events in order in the chart, according to the story.

Then write a good title for the chart.

People clean and decorate their houses.

The Parade of Lanterns occurs.

People set off firecrackers.

The bell at Longhua Temple is rung 108 times.

3. Title:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Use complete sentences to answer the question.

4. How did the British help turn Shanghai into the cosmopolitan city it is today?
